

# *Iowa Outdoors*

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
**www.iowadnr.com**

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## **MISSISSIPPI RIVER ANGLERS BENEFIT FROM NEW PROJECTS**

GUTTENBERG – A massive habitat improvement project on the upper Mississippi River will remove years of siltation and offer fish a deeper water sanctuary during the crucial winter months. Anglers will be drawn to pool 11 for ice fishing because, once the work is completed, the fish will come.

Mud Lake, in the lower portion of pool 11 near Dubuque, will have 22 acres deepened to 6 to 8 feet that will offer bass and bluegill some badly needed wintering holes. Mud Lake is typical of many areas on the Mississippi River; areas that were once good places to fish have been impacted by silt to the point that fishing has become almost non-existent.

Scott Gritters, fisheries biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), said the project would make the whole 22 acres usable by fish. "Bass and bluegill need deeper water habitat with little or no flow and we just don't have a lot of that habitat on the Mississippi River," he said. "This will be a refuge for fish in the winter. It will also be incredible ice fishing spots. These fish will travel miles to this deeper hole."

Gritters said this project, conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will use the dredge spoil to create a two mile deflection embankment to protect the new deeper habitat. "This is a massive habitat project," Gritters said. The habitat improvement project will cost the federal government nearly \$4 million.

The Corps completed a similar project on Sunfish Lake, on the Wisconsin side of the river, earlier this year.

The other project is upstream at the Guttenberg harbor, immediately south of the DNR's fish hatchery. The project, primarily targeting angler access to river fishing, also would create handicap access to the riverfront.

"This is an extremely complicated project for the workers," Gritters said. The project had to take in to account water fluctuation of 22 feet and be usable at these different water levels while still maintaining handicap accessibility requirements. The engineers designed a two-level walkway to meet the handicap requirements, replaced the old boat ramp and old pilings and will make general improvements to the whole area. The harbor will also be deepened.

"This project will provide bank fishing access to really good fishing for a lot of species – walleye, sauger, bluegills, white bass – for people who may have limited mobility. This will really improve their access to the river," he said. The Iowa DNR is funding this project which costs nearly \$200,000.

"Both projects are really going to beef up the use of the area," Gritters said.

**For more information, contact Gritters at 563-252-1156.**

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## **CLARIFICATION ON NEW BLAZE ORANGE REQUIREMENT**

Upland game *bird* hunters will need to be decked out in some blaze orange this season. Those pursuing cottontail and jackrabbits need not. New legislation taking effect this fall requires upland game bird hunters to wear at least one article of external clothing (cap, vest, jacket, etc) that is at least 50 percent blaze orange. Upland game birds include pheasants, quail, partridge, ruffed grouse and woodcock. An earlier news release referred to upland game, which would include rabbits. While many rabbit-only hunters do wear orange--and while it is a great safety tool for the hunt--it is not required.

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## **NO INJURIES REPORTED DURING OPENING WEEKEND OF PHEASANT SEASON**

DES MOINES – The opening weekend of Iowa's pheasant season was the best on record – as far as unintentional injuries are concerned. For the first time ever, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources did not received any reports of hunter injuries.

“The first two weeks of pheasant season is when we investigate the most hunting incidents, so not having any during the opening weekend is great news,” said Rod Slings, recreation safety program supervisor with the Iowa DNR. “But we understand that the number of hunters was down slightly because of the lousy weather and the amount of standing corn.”

Slings said the number of hunter injuries is directly related to the number of pheasant hunters in the field. During years when pheasant numbers are better, more hunters are out in the field. In 2003, the DNR investigated 15 injuries while pheasant hunting. In 2002, which had a similar pheasant population estimate as 2004, there were five incidents.

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## **A GIFT OF IOWA’S NATURE FOR SOMEONE WHO ENJOYS THE OUTDOORS**

Do you have a person on your gift list that is difficult to buy for – but loves the outdoors? Well why not give them “A Gift of Iowa’s Nature” this holiday season?

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources forestry bureau has a way for you to give a gift of native trees and shrubs this holiday season. The Iowa State Forest Nurseries, in Ames and Montrose, raises high quality native tree and shrub conservation seedlings for Iowa residents to plant in their backyard, small acreage or larger landholding. To promote and encourage native tree and shrub plantings for songbird and wildlife habitat, state foresters have designed with the help of several environmental and outdoor organizations five different native tree and shrub seedling packets for purchase this holiday season for delivery in the spring. The gift recipients receive a certificate for the holiday. The native tree and shrub packets available are:

Songbird Packet – 20 trees (8 to 24 inches tall) for \$20 that is perfect for a larger backyard habitat project. The Songbird Packet includes 2 bur oaks, 2 white pines, 4 wild plum, 4 chokecherry, 4 gray dogwoods and 4 serviceberry and is recommended by Audubon Iowa.

Wildlife Packet – 200 trees (8 to 24 inches tall) for \$90. This Wildlife packet is great for small acreage owners who have ½ to 1 acre to plant and includes 50 white pine, 50 bur oak, 50 gray dogwoods and 50 highbush cranberry.

Turkey Packet – 200 trees (8 to 24 inches tall) for \$90. This Turkey packet provides need mast trees for that ½ to 1 acre planting and includes 50 bur oak, 50 white oak, 50 pin oak and 50 gray dogwoods and is recommended by the Iowa Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Pheasant Packet – 200 trees (8 to 24 inches tall) for \$90. This Pheasant packet provides food and winter cover and includes 50 redcedar, 50 wild plums, 50 ninebark and 50 gray dogwoods and is recommended by the Iowa Pheasants Forever chapters.

Quail Packet – 200 trees (8 to 24 inches tall) for \$90. This Quail packet provides food and winter cover and includes 100 wild plum and 100 gray dogwood and is recommended by DNR Wildlife Biologists

Please place your order via phone or email by December 20 to receive the certificate in time for the holidays. The DNR will send a gift certificate to the recipient and identify whom the gift was from. You could also give yourself this gift of nature – it makes a wonderful house and warming gift. Once ordered the trees and shrubs will be delivered between the end of March and the end of April.

To order or for more information about the packets and gift certificate, call the State Forest Nursery at 1-800-865-2477 or go on line to [www.iowadnr.com/forestry/](http://www.iowadnr.com/forestry/)

**For more information, contact John Walkowiak, chief of the DNR's forestry bureau, at 515-242-5966.**

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